

Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1-14. (**Cancelled**)

15. (NEW) A component mounting method comprising:
- transporting a circuit board to a component mounting position;
 - sucking up a component by a suction nozzle of a component mounting head;
 - moving the component, sucked to the suction nozzle, to the component mounting position;
 - mounting the component to a specified site of the circuit board;
 - transferring the circuit board and/or a second circuit board relative to the component mounting position after mounting the component;
 - moving the component mounting head to a position above a component discarding box during the transfer of the circuit board; and
 - identifying whether or not a component suction nozzle is loaded in the component mounting head, wherein the identifying operation is performed during a specified time period in which a component mounting operation is not being performed.
16. (New) The component mounting method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the transferring operation is performed during the specified period and comprises transferring the second circuit board to the component mounting position while the component mounting head is moved to the position over the component discarding box.
17. (New) The component mounting method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the transferring operation is performed during the specified period and comprises transferring the first circuit board away from the component mounting position while the component mounting head is moved to the position over the component discarding box.

18. (New) The component mounting method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising feeding compressed air to the suction nozzle in order to remove any component remaining at the suction nozzle due to residual vacuum pressure, and to simultaneously remove contaminants sticking to the suction nozzle.

19. (NEW) A component mounting method comprising:
transporting a first circuit board to a component mounting position;
sucking up a component by a suction nozzle of a component mounting head;
moving the component, sucked to the suction nozzle, to the component mounting position;
mounting the component to a specified site of the first circuit board;
transferring the first circuit board away from the component mounting position after the component mounting operation has been performed;
transferring a second circuit board to the component mounting position to begin a second component mounting operation;
moving the component mounting head to a position above a component discarding box during the transfer of the circuit board; and
identifying the nozzle that has been loaded in the component mounting head, wherein the identifying operation is performed during a time period in which the first circuit board is transferred away from the component mounting operation and the second circuit board is transferred to the component mounting position.

20. (New) The component mounting method as claimed in claim 19, further comprising feeding compressed air to the suction nozzle in order to remove any component remaining at the suction nozzle due to residual vacuum pressure while simultaneously removing dust and other contaminants from the suction nozzle.

21.(NEW) A component mounting method defined in claim 19, further comprising discarding the suction nozzle into the component discarding box, loading another suction nozzle in the component mounting head, and determining whether the loaded suction nozzle matches a next type of component to be mounted.

22.(NEW) A component mounting method defined in claim 21, wherein the determining operation is performed by comparing the identified nozzle with nozzle data stored in a control memory.